

A contribution of social design study to the “mobility study”

Consideration on the formation of identities in Germany, in reference to
the Malaysian theory and some implications to Japan

「移動学」における社会デザイン学の可能性
— マレーシアの理論からドイツのアイデンティティ形成と
日本社会を考察する —

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Introduction

The investigation in this essay is based on the biographical interviews of some female immigrants who live in Germany and are in the integration courses organized by the German government to learn about German society. And then, the Malaysian methodology, which has developed in the multi-ethnic nation to find the way to deal with its situation, will be quoted to examine their biographies. The research intends to reveal how they have built their identities and confronted the unstable concept of “national states (nationalities)” and what kind of “national identity” might fit for those people with “mobility” in the globalization era.

It might be considered that this study is in the field of “mobility study”, which has developed significantly in recent years. The study is to discuss about the diversified “mobility” caused by the globalization in the sociological sphere and considered to be rooted in immigration sociology (Yoshihara, 2013: 85, 93). It may be said that the Social Design Study is also able to play an important role in this frontier field, because its issue is “to pursue concrete methodologies to both resolve these problem and implement their solution in the contemporary society⁽¹⁾”. Therefore it must inevitably include such trials, seeking for an “identity” of “mobility” people, which are recent occurrences of globalization.

In Addition, for the “mobility study”, according to Yoshihara, a new methodological approach is required to reveal the diversity of “immigration”, as well as that of ethnic societies. It is thought to resolve itself into the question of nationality and citizenship (ibid.: 97–98). It is obvious that the issues of both fields are very close and co-related.

Hopefully, this attempt would lead not only to the contribution to new trends of studies but also to the expansion of existing assumptions. Let me note here special thanks to Professor Yukie OSA and Professor Sai KURASAWA, who checked this paper previously.

1. Malaysia: the “authority-defined” and “everyday-defined” in a multi-ethnic society

Malaysia is a “plural society” and Malay people have been longing for a unified national identity since its dependence. Such a quest is shown in its unique socio-economic policy “bumiputera”, which is to put the Malay people into priority. Malay people (ca.62%⁽²⁾) used to be in the poor segment of the population, compared to Chinese Malaysian (ca.22%) and Indian Malaysian (ca.6.6%). Due to such economical imbalance which was the negative legacies of British colonialism, the tension between Malay people and non-Malay people (especially Chinese Malaysian) had mounted (Zawawi, 11–12). Thus, the government executed “bumiputera” and the education policy based on Malay language at the same time (Abdullah, 2007⁽³⁾). That is to say, acquiring the collective national identity as “Malaysian” as well as keeping each ethnic identity had been required for the development of the strong independent state after British colonial period (Minei, 2007: 56⁽⁴⁾). Shamsul A.B., an Anthropologist in Malaysia, presenting such difficult situation of Malaysian experience as a case, tried to offer useful approach to grasp the process of identity formation (Shamsul, 18–19). According to Shamsul, identity formation takes place within what he would call “two social reality” contexts: the “authority-defined” social reality and the “everyday-defined” social reality. The former is the social reality which has been authoritatively defined to let the people be in part of the dominant power structure, and generally recorded in video or text. The latter is the one which has been experienced by the people in the course of everyday life and has not be recorded unless any researchers such as anthropologists or historians make research on it. These two social realities exist side by side at any given time, but intricately linked and constantly influencing each other. They may or may not be identical. They are in fact rarely identical because the “everyday-defined” social reality is experienced and “authority-defined” social reality is only observed and interpreted. Both, then, are mediated through the social class position of those who observe and interpret social reality and those who experience it (ibid: 18).

An important point of Shamsul’s view here is that “authority-defined” national identity is not based on homogeneous nationalisms, as it is interpreted by non-homogeneous dominant power that consists of various ethnic groups with pluralized identities and interests. Therefore he sometimes refers to it as a “plural society nation”, which enables the people to hold their “everyday-defined” and belonging ethnic identity and is thought to be suitable for the Malaysian multi-ethnic society (ibid.: 24–31).

2. Germany: the former “authority-defined” non-immigration country

Through the presentation of Malaysian experience, Shamsul hopes not only to elaborate the approach of identity, but also to capture some aspects of Malaysia's struggle for the identity formation (ibid.: 18). However, such identity conflicts have not only been Malaysia, but also in Germany. The mismatch between the “authority-defined” and the “everyday-defined” social reality can still be observed and it is said to have been caused by the ban on recruit of “*Gastarbeiter* (guest worker)” in the beginning of 1970s. Hence, In the German context, “authority-defined” was “non-immigration country”, while “everyday-defined”, was “immigration country”.

After the World war second, Germany needed manpower for its reconstruction, but there were too little workers left because a lot of people were killed in the war. To recruit workers, Germany begun to invite “*Gastarbeiter* (guest worker)” from other countries and issued them working visas. However after the oil crisis, Germany suspended it and started to encourage “Guests” to go back to their home countries. This resulted in the occurrence against German government's intention; the number of the foreigners has been increasing, especially the worker from Turkey would not go back, because they have little possibility to find jobs in their homeland. In other words they prefer to stay in Germany for the longer period with limited “Citizenship”, to continue renewing working visas, and bring their family from their home country. Hence, not the number of foreign workers, but that of foreign wives and children increased.

In spite of such situation, German policy for foreigners had stayed unchanged. The government insisted, Germany remained as no-immigration country and almost the foreigner were to stay only for short time and go back to their original countries again (Herbert, 2001: 261–262). While for the academics and politicians, it is already obvious since 1980s that the Germany had been immigration country (ibid.: 343).

3. German trial to match “authority-defined” Identity — changing law&Integration course

Giddens described such German situation “The country officially denies multiculturalism,” in his famous writing “The third way” (Giddens, 1998: 136). It was written, however, in the end of 20th century. In 21st Century, German policy for foreigners has dramatically changed. For example, the children, who are born in Germany, can get German passport. It could be said that the society is going in the direction of “multiculturalism”, setting higher value on “diversity⁽⁵⁾”. In other words, Germany recognized itself as an immigration country in 21st century, renewed its “authority-defined” identity and changed the immigration and nationality act.

This change reminds us of the following sentence by Giddens. He described Germany

shall become a “cosmopolitan nation”, which permits diversity in values defined by cosmopolitan nationalism.

Germany is something of a test case for cosmopolitan nationalism in the context of Europe, because the country officially denies its multiculturalism. Naturalization is currently based on descent, not place of birth. Generations of immigrant children born in Germany remain foreigners, while those of German origins born in other countries may claim German citizenship. To pioneer a cosmopolitan identity, the citizenship laws need to be changed and a major cultural shift made. A cosmopolitan nation needs values to which all are committed, and an identity with which citizens are comfortable, but it also has to accept ambiguity and cultural diversity (ibid.: 136–137).

However, instead of German transformation to provide “comfortable identity”, the foreigners had to make efforts to gain “authority-defined” identity. Integration course, which gives the basic knowledge of German society as well as German language, is obligatory to the foreigners, who are to live continuously in Germany and are willing to obtain German nationality.

4. Various biographies of female immigrants — Identity between “nationalities”

What is the meaning of the Integration course for the identity formation of the participants?

Back to the Shamsul’s discourse, “authority-defined” social realities are defined with the text recorded, while the “everyday-defined” are not and only orally-transmitted. It is often the case with immigrants especially asylums that they can read and write in German but cannot in their mother tongue, because of no school experience. For those women, “authority-defined” social realities take place only in German, while they have to manage “everyday-defined” social realities with the languages of the country they came from.

It means the difference of social realities corresponds to that of the languages of those people. Furthermore, the gap seems to have never disappeared, because they will have no chance to obtain the “authority-defined” text code of the country of their origin. Therefore, they should learn German and live in the German “authority-defined” social realities.

Following the examples of such women, the article in the local newspaper reported:

- A woman from Afghanistan

Now an asylum seeker. She is learning English with English dictionary and her daughter is learning German with German dictionary. The daughter is in the 2nd grade

at the elementary school and can speak German, so mother is taught German by the daughter.

・ A woman from India

worked as a nurse, but came to Germany because of the family problem. Her son was born in a hospital in Gerresheim in Germany. She wants to take a practical training to work as a nurse also in Germany, after her son has become enough grown up to go to the kindergarten.

Being still an asylum seeker (not being able to work because the work permit was not given by authority), the life is not easy as she has to spend 90 Euro for language course from 234 Euro per month. However, it should become better, if only she can get the residence permit.

・ A woman from Iran

studied marketing and worked at energy ministry. Having offended the law discriminating women, she seeks asylum. She wants to apply for the admission to the art college. So she takes pictures for the recipe books, which is one of the activities in the immigration course.

(Westdeutsche Zeitung 2011/12/15)

5. For the diverse Identities of the children with immigrants background

The difference in social realities means that in languages; but is it also the case for their children? They are to be grown up in Germany and a parts of their “everyday-defined” social realities, such kindergarten or school life, is to take place in German language. For them the difference in social realities does not correspond to that in languages. Could they be recognized by the difference in anything except languages? Should they stay or sometimes keep drifting between two social realities? Or should they abandon either of them? In the first place, is it possible in such situation in Germany, where over 10% of the residents are foreigners and various ethnic communities have already been created? They sometimes have their relatives chased after their pioneer and the alien can feel as if they were in the country of their origin without caring about German grammar. Thus, if they wish, they are able to live only in the community without knowing German language and society.

Therefore, how the children, as well as young generation, be included in German society, is a main theme of German “Integration” policy, especially after the result of PISA 2000 revealed the gap of attainments also with scholastic abilities between native and non-native German (sato, 2010: 116). According to the news there was the fear in Germany to be the “parallel society”, where social and economic situations are clearly separated according to its belongings and birth and there is little chance to transfer another side. Such situation might lead to social and political instability with violence due to the frustration caused by the social inequality. Therefore, “Integration” is one of

the most important issues in Germany (Bundesamt, 2007: 12). “Integration” is intended to keep the society stable and, facing to aging population and lower birthrate, to supply qualified work force at the same time.

There is no need to say what “parallel” in Germany means; native and non-native. Nevertheless back to Shamsul’s discourse, could those situation replace “authority-defined” and “every day-defined” “in Parallel” to exist? If it is possible enough, its substitution enables it to capture “Integration” as a trial making “authority-defined” and “every day-defined” come close each other. How do they try to put into practice? Here only the following phenomena in the education field are focused;

- (1) “Every day-defined”; promoting earlier education in German
- (2) “Authority-defined”; approving of diversity, various senses of value

(1) Create a new “everyday-defined” social reality — early education and working mother

The early education is strongly recommended both in the Integration plan and the action plan (Bundesregierung, 2007, 2012). It seems to be based on the idea “As the twig is bent, so grows the tree”; the earlier a child touches German, the better he acquires it to be a possible good German citizen in the future. However, it influences not only to the children but also to their mother, because their life tend to have strong connection to child care. This leads to the answer to the question why the child care service during the female and parents integration course is recommended by the federal immigration office (Bundesamt, 2012: 115–116⁽⁶⁾).

However, the shortage of nurseries is an acknowledged problem in Germany, which is not limited for migrants. Having been connected with “Integration” it seems to be paid attention by public. Quoting Ehmann’s point, Integration has been already long prevented from being systematic problems, such as insufficient vacancy in kindergartens and its cost arising as a problem since a couple of decade before 1990’s German reunification (Ehmann, 2008: 84). For example, in an immigrants’ (Turkish) family whose mother or grandmother is not employed, the children should have to only stay with them and do not get enough chance to touch German before going to school. If the parents are both unoccupied, it is almost impossible to seek vacancy in nurseries (ibid.). He also pointed out other themes of the Integration plan (2007); the life betterment of women and girls and realization of equal opportunity (Bundesregierung, 2007). Thus, the female integration courses can be regarded as an intention to fulfil two objects of Integration plan at the same time: promoting early education for coming German generation and let the women have the occupation or status in German “authority-defined” social realities, which are separate from familial “everyday-defined” social reality. In other words, “Integration” of next generation as well as building “unseparated” future society is in strong connection with women’s self-reliance. Therefore it must lead to “authority-defined” ideal type of family; parent or parents, especially mother, who

understands German and has somehow connected with German Society, and children also understanding German and being possible German citizen in the future. It could be said that “everyday-defined” familial social realities are to change through learning German provided by the government and along with its “authority-defined” ideal family.

(2) The need to transform “authority-defined” — “diversity” becomes the norm

Is it good enough, however, to close the gap between two social realities only by means of common language? The question must have been arisen in Germany as we see the word “diversity (vielfält)” covers the wide range of the national action plan on integration (2012) compared with its precedence. It is remarkable that the word is used with immigrants’ “every-day defined” social realities such as cultural and religious variety of immigrants’ families, while it meant only about work or employment such as “diversity management” in Integration plan (2007). We can see it concisely from the following description about the early childhood education;

Day care centres and day nurseries are the first educational sites for children outside the family. The earlier children experience individual, comprehensive education, learning and care, the more naturally and successfully they master their further educational path and educational direction as a whole. This requires that institutions pay attention to the diversity of family situations and consider the different needs of children and parents when developing their range of services. Entailed therein is a changed perspective: diversity is no longer an exception, but the norm. It provides opportunities for learning and development to everybody. (Bundesregierung, 2007⁽⁷⁾)

From the above sentences it can be seen that the government fully recognizes the need to change the educational institutions, as well as for the government itself to adopt “everyday-defined” social realities. That is to say, the provider of education is a reflected figure of authority, as it is the federal government “authority” that provides education regarding German language⁽⁸⁾. It also means that the government is aware of mismatch between its “authority-defined” and “everyday-defined” social realities and tries to make “authority-defined” social realities to fit diverse “everyday-defined” social realities.

6. Discussion on the stage of social design study and its meaning for Japan

Let us think again, what is the task of social design study. Having been seeking for the new way from the beginning of 21st century, one-eighth of the century has already passed. What have we found in this couple of decades? Could we prospect the further direction in this century? The 20th Century can be referred to as the period of wars, as the World War I began in the second decade of the century and it transformed to

the Cold War, which had continued till the end of the century. The previous century tells us, what we tackle just now could become the issue throughout this century. What corresponds to this century? “Diversity in the globalization” must be said as a possible key phrase in this century.

Compared to German and Malaysian study, however, are our concept, “diversity” in Japanese social realities, different from them? Or is it as same as that of 2007 in Germany concerned only with employment? We have to consider which “diversity” we are talking about; either the diversity in “authority defined” or that in “every day defined”, as well as the gap and relation between two of them. In addition, to pursue the definition of “diversity”, we could see also the gap among German, Malaysian and Japanese society. Thus, only through the conceptual study of “diversity” in contemporary world, we are to discover a hidden dimension in those countries, which should be one of the subjects in social design study. In other words, social design study must have possibility to become a new type of knowledge looking over not only the world but also Japan. It is not so easy because it demands the depth and breadth in knowledge. Moreover, it can be said that this essay might be regarded as only an introduction of my idea. Although being fully aware of these critics, I would say that this challenge, “Consideration on the formation of identities in Germany, in reference to the Malaysian theory and some implications to Japan⁽⁹⁾”, must shed light to a possibility of Social Design Study and leads to reveal a hidden dimension of “multi-culture” or “diversity”, which are the key words in the 21st century.

■ Notes

- (1) <http://english.rikkyo.ac.jp/academics/graduate/sd/> (2013/09/20)
- (2) Population quick info (Malaysia, status 2012)
http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=471&lang=en&Itemid=0 (2013/09/20)
- (3) “For Malaysia, the emergent education system acquired a special significance as an instrument for, and expression of, politically determined goals.” From Rudner, Martin, 1977, “Education, development and change in Malaysia,” *Academic Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol.15, No.1, June 1977, 23–62, Center for Southeast Asian Studies. (東南アジア研究 15 卷 1 号, 23–62, 京都大学東南アジア研究所)
<http://kyoto-seas.org/ja/category/volume-ja/> (2014/01/03)
- (4) Minei refers to Malaysian nation identity as “upper level concept” to each ethnic identity. Whereas Shansul seems to think that their relations are not “upper” or “bottom”, but “contrasting” that can exist in parallel on the same level and interact each other. As the length of this paper is limited, it is impossible to pick up this subject in detail, but it must be more deeply considered including the discourse of national “Integration”, which tend to be thought that subordinated “ethnic” is integrated to “upper” national identity.
- (5) The Theme of 2013 in Berlin city was the cultural diversity of cosmopolitan Berlin and its destruction by the Nazis was commemorated.
- (6) Statistics of federal immigration office in 2011

<http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2011.pdf> (2013/09/20)

- (7) Quoting from the English summary
http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/IB/2012-01-31-nap-kurzfassung-presse-englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1 (2013/09/20)
- (8) Basically the states (Länder) take the responsibility of its education policy in Germany, but exceptionally regarding Integration of migration has the federal immigration ministry in charge.
- (9) The Social Design Study is the first of its kind in Japan, as well as in the world, which a NPO in Berlin proved it. Kitayama pointed it out in the preface of “Social Design Review Vol.1” in 2009.

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